

BRIEFINGS

The latest news and updates from the Mid-Atlantic MIRECC



Director's Update



It was an honor to retire from VA on December 31, 2022, after more than 21 years in VA, including 14+ years serving as director for the VISN 6 (Mid-Atlantic) MIRECC.

1. Thank you to the many Veterans from the WW-II, Korean War; Vietnam and OEF/OIF/OND- eras who are my mentors, patiently teaching me about war and its mental health consequences;
2. Thank you to the MIRECC deputy directors and admin team who are the backbone of the MIRECC, keeping it running effectively in the interests of the Veterans we serve;
3. Thank you to the Research Core, Education Core and Clinical Core Directors and Co-Directors who keep us on mission;
4. Gratitude to the lab directors, investigators, and research teams who are focused on achieving new discoveries to improve Veterans mental health;
5. Thanks to OMHSP/VACO, VISN 6, and facility leadership at the Durham, Salisbury and Richmond VAMCs for their strong support of the MIRECC and its mission;
6. Appreciation to the leadership of VA ORD and VA non-profit organizations, such as the Durham IMR, and the Deans and Department Chairs of our university affiliates for their essential partnerships;
7. Thank you, All, for working together to provide cutting-edge research and education on the nature, assessment and treatment of mental illness in returning Veterans;
8. Finally, love and thanks to my family for their enduring support for my next phase of life as a doting grandparent.

John A. Fairbank, PhD

Former Director, Mid-Atlantic (VISN 6) MIRECC

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FOCUS ON THE VISN

NEWS



We are pleased to announce that **Dr. Jennifer Naylor, PhD**, has accepted a detail as the Interim Director, VISN 6 MIRECC, beginning January 1st, 2023.

Jennifer Naylor, PhD has served as the Deputy Director for the VISN 6 Mental Illness Research, Education and Clinical Center (MIRECC) since 2020 and is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Duke University School of Medicine. Over the past 10 years, Dr. Naylor has held multiple leadership positions within the VISN 6 MIRECC which include Co-Director of the Clinical Core and Associate Director of the Interventions and Metabolomics Laboratory.

Dr. Naylor is dually trained as both an Experimental and Clinical Psychologist and has extensive translational research experience working with both preclinical and clinical research models. Her primary research interests are in the conduction of biomarker-informed clinical research trials. She is a Principal Investigator at the Durham VAHCS and is currently conducting a Merit Review Award funded by Clinical Services Research and Development (CSR&D). She serves as Chair for the RR&D Career Development Program Subcommittee and is a member of the CSR&D Psychiatric, Behavioral Health and Neurologic Disorders Centralized Data Monitoring Committee. Dr. Naylor also serves as a member of the Office of Research & Development (ORD)/Office of Mental Health & Suicide Prevention (OMHSP) Executive Steering Committee and Chairs the Durham VAHCS Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Please join us in welcoming Dr. Naylor to her position as Interim Director, VISN 6 MIRECC.

Robin A. Hurley, M.D., FAAPA

Associate Director, Mid-Atlantic (VISN 6) MIRECC



On behalf of Dr. James M. Goff, Jr., Chief Medical Officer, I am pleased to announce the appointment of **Dr. Robin Hurley, MD** as the VISN 6 Research Lead, and **Ms. Amy Morris** as the Research Lead Administrative Officer, effective January 1, 2023. These positions are both part-time VISN 6 appointments and Dr. Hurley and Ms. Morris will continue in their current roles at the Salisbury VA Medical Center. We are grateful to the Salisbury Executive Leadership Team for their support.

As the Research Lead for VISN 6, Dr. Hurley will be focused on creating a VISN-level research community for collaborations and partnerships, developing grant funding infrastructure and leadership, creating a "Home" for mentoring the next generation of VISN 6 researchers, and serving as the VISN-level consultant for research questions and consultation.

Please join me in congratulating them on their new roles.

Mary Parker, PharmD, MBA, FASHP, FCCP, BCPS, BCCP

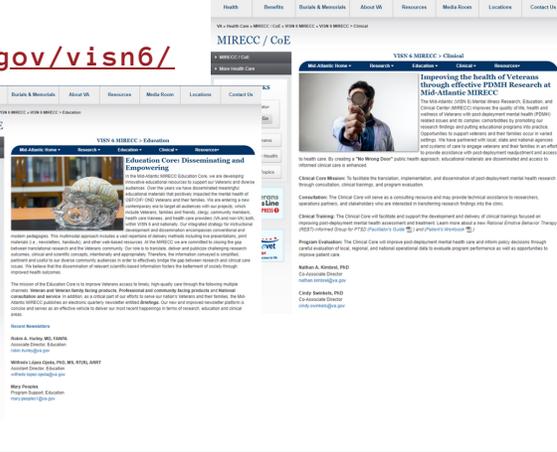
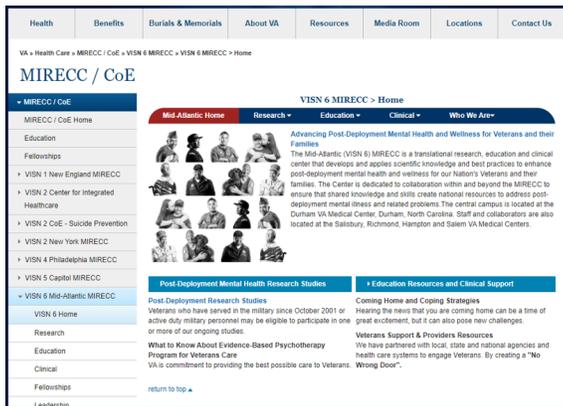
Deputy Chief Medical Officer

Principal investigator **Stephanie Wells, PhD**, who was recognized in the Fall newsletter (September) for being selected as principal investigator in an HSR & D study, has started her work on her Career Development Award: "Adapting Treatment Delivery to Improve Retention in Evidence-Based PTSD Treatment." Here is an update on her work.

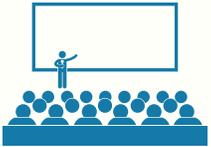
Dr. Wells' CDA-2 aims to improve the delivery of and engagement in evidence-based PTSD treatments in the VA Health Care System. Dr. Wells will be studying how to best adapt PTSD treatments into an intensive "massed" format (i.e., treatment delivered at least three times a week within a month). Dr. Wells will be eliciting key informants' perspectives (e.g., Veterans, providers, and administrators) about how to make massed treatments feasible and acceptable within the VA system. This work will inform the massed treatment to be examined in a pragmatic trial comparing massed PTSD treatment to weekly treatment in a VA PTSD Outpatient Clinic. Dr. Wells will also utilize national data from the Corporate Data Warehouse to characterize Veterans who begin, and complete massed treatments compared to those who prematurely discontinue treatment.

MIRECC has a new Website!

NEW!
NEW!
NEW!



EDUCATION AND DISSEMINATION



Invited Lectures, Poster Presentations & Webinars

O'Connor V.L. (October 12, November 11, 2022) Co-presenter for a Morbidity & Mortality (M&M) presentation for the Mental Health staff, Salisbury VA Healthcare System (3 sites). Relevant neuropsychological factors that likely contributed to the Veteran's death by suicide. (Virtual)

Shura, R. D. (December, 2022). DSM-5-TR: An overview of changes from the DSM-5. Invited presentation for Mental Health Grand Rounds at the Salisbury VAMC, Salisbury, NC.



Conference Participation/Research Presentations



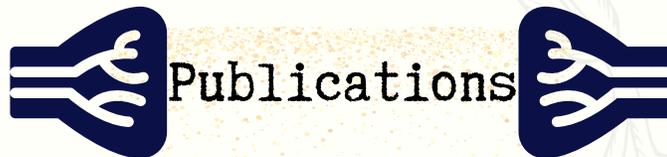
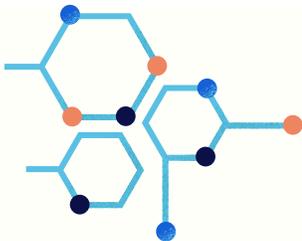
Nieuwsma, J.A. (November 17, 2022). Moral injury: From combat veterans to COVID-19 healthcare workers. Invited presentation delivered to the Durham VA Health Care System C3PO series. (Virtual)

Nieuwsma, J.A. (October 2022). Moral injury: From military combat to medical care. Invited presentation delivered for the Wake Med Spiritual Care Department Retreat, Raleigh, NC.

Nieuwsma, J.A. (October 25, 2022). Indications, interventions, and interconnections in the care of the morally injured. Invited presentation delivered for the National Conference of Veterans Affairs Catholic Chaplains (NCVACC), Salt Lake City, UT.

Nieuwsma, J.A. & Smigelsky, M.A. (September 27, 2022). Measuring moral injury: The moral injury outcomes scale (MIOS) and other considerations. Invited presentation delivered for the Moral Injury Network Webinar Series, Integrative Mental Health (virtual).

Smigelsky, M.A., Nieuwsma, J.A., Anderson, S., Meador, K.G., Jackson, G.L. (December 2022). Describing the impact of a dynamic diffusion network on VA provider engagement and practice improvement and delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic. Poster presented at the Academy Health / NIH 15th Annual Conference on the Science of Dissemination and Implementation, Washington, DC.



Scientific Articles:

Ford, C.G., Smigelsky, M.A., Yi, J.Y., Trimm, V.M., Wortmann, J.H., Meador, K.G., & Nieuwsma, J.A. (2022). Measuring morality: Analyzing the factor structure of the moral foundations questionnaire in veterans. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*. doi:[10.1002/jclp.23448](https://doi.org/10.1002/jclp.23448)

López-Ojeda, W., Hurley, R.A. (2023). The Medical Metaverse, Part I: Introduction, Definitions, and New Horizons for Neuropsychiatry. doi:[10.1176/appi.neuropsych.20220187](https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.neuropsych.20220187)

Shura, R. D., Ingram, P. B., Miskey, H. M., Martindale, S. L., Rowland, J. A., & Armistead-Jehle, P. (2022). Validation of the Personality Assessment Inventory's (PAI) Cognitive Bias (CBS) and Cognitive Bias Scale of Scales (CB-SOS) in a post-deployment veteran sample. *The Clinical Neuropsychologist*. Advance online publication. doi: [10.1080/13854046.2022.2131630](https://doi.org/10.1080/13854046.2022.2131630)

Smigelsky, M.A., Maynard, J.L., Ford, C.G., Parker, R., Wortmann, J.H., Meador, K.G., Fink, A., & Nieuwsma, J.A. (2022). Increasing chaplain support for veterans at high risk for suicide through targeted outreach: A quality improvement initiative. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*. doi: [10.1080/08854726.2022.2136466](https://doi.org/10.1080/08854726.2022.2136466)



RESOURCES FOR VETERANS & FAMILIES

Visit [Self-help resources](#) to obtain education and support information for Veterans, friends and family members who may be facing mental health challenges. VA specialists have assembled a short list of reviewer's recommended materials that may be helpful in finding the most appropriate information for you. We have a new education pamphlet on Moral Injury (MI), click [here](#).

Please click on each resource topic for more information.

- [General Mental Health](#)
- [Depression & Anxiety](#)
- [PTSD](#)
- [Substance Use Disorder \(SUD\)](#)



For additional help, click "[How to Use](#)."



There are several free and anonymous on-line education and life coaching programs that use interactive exercises and video demonstrations to teach skills for overcoming life challenges. For more information, click [here](#).



DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

The DMVA Resource Guide is produced and published by the North Carolina Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to assist and educate Veterans in learning about state and federal veteran benefits. View or Download by clicking [here](#).



PROVIDER EDUCATION

UPCOMING WEBINARS FOR NATIONAL CBOC MENTAL HEALTH GRAND ROUNDS
 "Darwinian Medicine, Burnout, and Self-Compassion"

Presenter: Hector A. Garcia, PsyD

Dates: Wednesday, February 8, 2023, 8:00 - 9:00 am CT and Thursday, February 9, 2023, 11:00 am - 12:00 pm CT (repeat)

Click [here](#) to register

Check the website for previous webinars in this series available for credit in TMS.

For direct links to upcoming webinars, click [here](#).



VA HSR&D Cyberseminars

MIRECC PRESENTS WEBINAR:

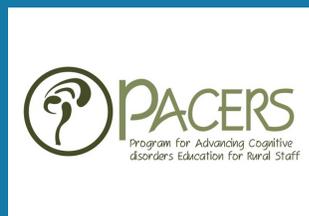
The 2022-2023 schedule for MIRECC Presents has concluded. MIRECC Presents will reconvene in October for the 2023-2024 schedule.

Register through [VA EES TMS](#) then attend LIVE at

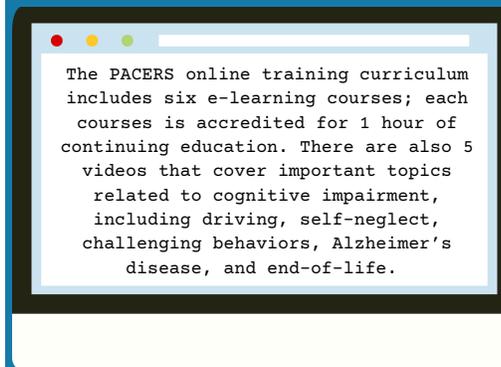
<http://va-ees-adobeconnect.com/mireccpresents/>

Access the MIRECC Presents webinar series calendar for upcoming events online at

<https://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn20/education/webinars-mirecc-presents.asp>



PACERS is an education program for health care staff who care for Veterans with cognitive disorders and their caregivers. While this program targets rural health care staff, providers working in any setting can benefit from this information.



The PACERS online training curriculum includes six e-learning courses; each course is accredited for 1 hour of continuing education. There are also 5 videos that cover important topics related to cognitive impairment, including driving, self-neglect, challenging behaviors, Alzheimer's disease, and end-of-life.

VA Providers: Take courses using TMS links

Non-VA Providers: Use TRAIN links

Course 1: Driving and Dementia-Hanging up the Keys.

Course 2: How to Deliver the Diagnosis of Alzheimer's Disease.

Course 3: How to Have an End of Life Discussion.

Course 4: How to Identify Self-Neglect.

Course 5: Addressing Decision-Making and Safety in Dementia.

[VISIT PACERS](#) for links to each course.



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VA



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of Veterans Affairs

BRIEFINGS

Stay Up to Date on Mid-Atlantic MIRECC
Contact (Nancy.martino@va.gov) to ensure
you're on the mailing list to receive copies of
our newsletter.

Next Issue: SPRING 2023